

1.29.020 Creation of a Human Rights Commission.

There is hereby established a commission, to be known as the Human Rights Commission of the City of Tacoma (hereinafter referred to as the "Commission"), consisting of 15 members representative of the general public, such as students; employer groups; the housing industry; and labor, religious, racial, ethnic, disabled, and women's groups in the City, to be nominated and appointed in accordance with City Council rules and procedures.

A. Duties and Powers of the Commission. The Commission shall have the duty and power to:

1. Initiate complaints charging unlawful practices as set forth in this chapter; provided, that no such action shall be taken with respect to any complaint within the exclusive jurisdiction of any state or federal agency. Each Commissioner shall have the power to initiate a complaint, whether or not such Commissioner is aggrieved, subject to approval by the Commission.

2. Review and act upon case closures as recommended by the department staff, petitions for reconsideration, and/or conciliation agreements.

3. Study, investigate, mediate, and hold public meetings on communitywide problems arising in the City of Tacoma which may result in intergroup tensions or discrimination, including race, religion, color, national origin or ancestry, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, marital status, familial status, or the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability, and make such technical studies as are appropriate to effectuate the purpose and policies of this chapter.

4. Consult with and maintain contact with other public agencies, civil rights organizations, representatives of employers, labor unions, property owners, associations, realtor associations, religious denominations and institutions, professional associations, national origin groups, community organizations concerned with interracial, interreligious and intercultural understanding, social welfare organizations, and any other such organizations and institutions as directed by the City Council or as the Commission shall deem advisable to further the objectives of this chapter.

5. Cooperate with and make written recommendations to the Mayor, City Council, City Manager, and City department heads toward the development and implementation of programs and

practices for the purpose of furthering the objectives of this chapter.

6. Form committees and subcommittees and appoint persons, in addition to members of the Commission, to such committees and subcommittees in order to assist the Commission in effectuating the purposes of this chapter.

7. Perform such other functions and duties as may be directed by the City Council or prescribed or authorized by any resolution or ordinance of the City. In prescribing the above duties and functions of the Commission, it is not the intent of the City Council to duplicate or overlap the functions, duties, or responsibilities heretofore or hereafter assigned to any department, board, or committee of the City or the responsibilities of the City Manager. Upon request, the Commission shall cooperate with and render assistance and make recommendations to all public officials, departments, and public or private organizations or citizens.

8. The Commission is specifically authorized to adopt and promulgate interpretive rules, regulations, and guidelines to properly implement and administer the provisions hereof. Rules, regulations, and guidelines thus adopted shall be approved by resolution of the City Council of the City of Tacoma prior to their becoming effective.

9. The Commission is specifically authorized to make rules and regulations governing its organization and procedures which are not inconsistent with this chapter or any other chapter or section of the Tacoma Municipal Code.

B. Terms of Office of Commissioners. The term of office of all members of the Commission shall be three years, except for the student member whose term of office shall be for a period no longer than two years or until no longer a student or until attainment of age 24, whichever occurs first; provided, that any individual appointed to fill a vacancy other than a student member shall be appointed only for the unexpired term of the member whom he or she succeeds. Each member of the Commission shall serve only until the expiration of his or her individual term of office. Failure to maintain his or her status as a student shall act as a forfeiture of the student member's Commission position. Any member of the Commission may be removed by the Mayor and City Council for misconduct or malfeasance in office after being given a written statement outlining such behavior and an opportunity to be heard thereon.

C. Termination of Commissioners for Absence. The appointment of any member of the Commission who has been absent from three consecutive regular or special meetings of the Commission without approval of said Commission shall automatically terminate. The City Clerk shall notify any member whose appointment has automatically ended and report to the appointing authority that a vacancy exists on said Commission and that an appointment should be made for the unexpired term. The Commission shall have the power and authority to excuse any member from attendance at any regular business meeting or study session for good cause. The Commission shall also have the power and authority to create and execute a more rigid standard of attendance should a majority of Commission members deem such standard necessary for the effective functioning of the Commission.

D. Commission Officers. The Commission shall elect one of its members as Chairperson and one of its members as Vice-Chairperson, each of whom shall hold office for a period of two years or until his or her successor is duly elected, unless his or her term as a member of the Commission expires sooner.

E. Commission Meetings and Procedures. The Commission shall establish a regular time and place of meeting and shall hold at least one regular meeting each month. Special study sessions may be called by the Chairperson or by a simple majority of the Commission members. Personal notice of all special study sessions shall be given to all Commission members by mail or by telephone at least 24 hours prior to the start of such study session.

1. Quorum of the Commission. A simple majority of those Commission members duly appointed and acting in office at any given time shall constitute a quorum of the Commission at that time. An affirmative vote of at least a majority of those Commissioners present at any given meeting is required to take any official action at such meeting; provided, that a majority vote of the entire Commission shall be required for a finding or decision of the Commission.

2. Commission Public Meetings. All regular, special, and business meetings of the Commission shall be held in strict accordance with and pursuant to any and all applicable state laws as the same now exist, or as hereafter amended, with respect to open and public meetings. (Ord. 27092 § 1; passed Jun. 10, 2003; Ord. 26948 § 2; passed Apr. 23, 2002; Ord. 25617 § 1; passed Nov. 1, 1994; Ord. 25352 § 1; passed Aug. 31, 1993)